2013

Earth, Visual Arts

Jelena Bogdanović
Iowa State University, jelenab@iastate.edu

nownedness of the fourth continent to its being located in the heat of the south. What is said about the antipodes is thus the product of speculation and fabulation.

This issue was taken up by medieval literature dealing with the earth and the world respectively. On the one hand, it seemed a safe assumption that both the createdness and the finiteness of *terra* and *mundus* represent a contrast to God's inifinity; on the other hand, the existence of unknown regions was postulated, the nature of which was explored literarily. The German poem known as *Merigarto* (Old High German: world surrounded by the sea) from the end of the 11th century CE deals – apart from the separation of heavens during the creation process – with the clotted sea of the liver and other peculiar bodies of water. Literature on the journeys of discovery in the late Middle Ages and the early modern era seems to focus the semantic distinction between *terra* and *mundus* on the difference between, at least allegedly, known (Vespucci's *mundus novus*) and unknown (Magellan's *terra australis incognita*) regions.

Giordano Bruno dissolves the boundaries of unknown mundane regions toward the infinity of the universe. The edges of immanence are relocated to the divine domain. This new perspective is reflected in, e.g., Comenius' *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart* (1631), where a wayfarer is now able to discern the earth as a globular and rotating entity from a tower but is still experiencing vertigo as a consequence of its form and motion.

When Romantic literature placed the flexible human mind at the center of reflections on world and earth and the imagination as a means to surpass the boundaries thereof, the traditional tension of promise and anticipated compliance (Koschorke: 186) determined by the context of Christian eschatology was initially maintained. In Karl Philipp Moritz's *Anton Reiser* (1785–90), the protagonist compares the desired yet merely imagined infinity of the world to the infinity of the deity, and in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* Novalis combines the motif of the concrete journey and worldly experience with the motif of a longing for an imagined, transcendent destination. Heaven and earth as an incomprehensible creation and as an objective of empirical aspiration and scientific desperation represent the themes of Goethe's *Faust* (1808). The temptation of the unknown driving the Faustian scholar was in the course of the 19th century CE gradually substituted by a concentration on collecting, measuring, and describing the matters of the world in detail. In the first volume of his work *Kosmos* (1845), Alexander von Humboldt described the endeavor of a physical description of the world, which he – from the distinction between earth and world and based on discrete objects and a "naturbeschreibende Poesie" (a poetry depicting nature) – pictures as a depiction of the "Naturganze" (entirety of nature). In Stifter's preface to *Bunte Steine* (1853), a collection of narratives, the infinite quantity of the observed objects of nature equals the infinity of scholarly desire, which proves unable to comprehend fully the entirety of creation (Job 38–39) and can merely collect individual, at times inconspicuous, pieces and combine them to a poetics of observation.

Reversing the desire of humankind to reach beyond the boundaries of the earth, Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864) deals with the journey to its inner core. In this story the scientist Otto Lidenbrock, longing to explore the unknown, escapes hybris only by the skin of his teeth and is eventually denied entrance to the center of the earth. Tolstoy, in his work *How much Land does a Man need?* (1885), deals with the social standard gained through the ownership of land but likewise with human greed for property: the protagonist Pachom believes that owing to the ownership of land he was forearmed against the devil himself.

The wide, apathetic world filled with mysterious powers becomes the likeness of the lover in Walt Whitman's poem "Earth, My Likeness" (1900), in which the poet analogizes the micro and macro cosmos placing the micro cosmos at the top of creation chronology.

In the 20th and 21st centuries CE, world and earth are oftentimes addressed in view of their evanescence, which, as in Ransmayrs *Die letzte Welt* (The last world, 1988), can be implied in very concrete geological phenomena. In *Underworld* (1997), Don De Lillo relates the topics of the world's pollution and being injured by war to the issues of an ultimate destruction and a view on the microcosmos of its inhabitants (cf. such prophetic texts as Isa 24:4). Visions of post-apocalyptic desolation are depicted in Cormac MacCarthy's *The Road* (2007), where a father and his son roam across a blasted landscape toward the sea while discussing moral and metaphysical issues.

In the middle of the 20th century, however, J. R. Tolkien created in his stories a complete new world with its own myth of formation strongly reminiscent of the biblical creation account. With the designation "Middle-earth" he further draws on the ancient-medieval conception of a continent surrounded by water.

Bibliography: ■ Berry, T., *The Dream of The Earth* (San Francisco, Calif. 1988). ■ Koschorke, A., *Die Geschichte des Horizonts: Grenze und Grenzüberschreitung in literarischen Landschaftsbildern* (Frankfurt a.M. 1990).

Aleksandra Prica

VII. Visual Arts

Earth is mentioned in the opening verses of the first book of the HB/OT in reference to creation (Gen 1:1), thus attaining great significance for both cosmological and theological discussions. One can also

find numerous references to earth in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Kings, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, the Gospels, the Apocrypha, and related religious texts of liturgical poetry, such as Christmas hymns and carols. References to earth may be related to the earthly realm and place of "God made manifest," as in the NT narrative of the nativity in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Earth also takes a prominent place in the narratives about the Apocalypse and the Last Judgment. In addition, earth is a natural entity with its appropriate topography (rocks, caves, waters) and natural phenomena (earthquakes, see Isa 24:19; winds, fires, and floods as in Noah's story, Gen 6–9). Earth is the soil and ground (see Gen 2:7), a cultivated space of abundance (see Gen 49:25); it is occasionally related to a city as the representative of nations and kingdoms of earth (see Jer 33:9 about Jerusalem) but also to the wandering wilderness and the desert (see Gen 4:12, 14; Job 38:26).

Artists tried to depict these texts, yet the texts provide limited and inconclusive information about formal features of earth apart from its circular shape (see Isa 40:22) or its grand size (see Job 11:9). Visual representations of earth drawn from biblical references thus vary greatly. In addition to the literal representation of the ground, as in the imagery of harvesting and farming (e.g., the HB/OT stories about Adam and Eve [Gen 3:23]), three major conventions in the literal, symbolic, and moralizing representations of earth emerge from the vast visual material: 1) various theological-cosmological maps that combine Hellenistic cosmographical images with the textual references to the first day of creation, often showing earth as an island surrounded by continuous sea; 2) imagery about creation, the nativity, and the Last Judgment that include the Hellenistic personification of earth (*Geia*) as a young female with various attributes; 3) depictions of birds and other animals, plants, or a rainbow that, stemming from biblical sources, provide indirect references to earth. These various images of earth are found in almost all artistic media from coins, textiles, and reliefs, to book-size illuminated manuscripts and printed illustrations and maps, to large-scale mosaics and frescoes in architectural interiors. In early Christian buildings, the floors were the most popular place for displaying the terrestrial world. In the later periods, the personifications of earth within the Christian narratives were often represented on walls, vaults, and ceilings.

Images of the terrestrial world usually display a selection of realistically depicted animals and plants from the earth surrounded by marine creatures or personifications for earth and ocean. For example, literal interpretations of earth as the terrestrial world are visible in the floor mosaic of the 6th-century Nikopolis basilica of Doumetios and on the 6th-century carved wooden ceiling beams from St. Catherine's monastery, Mt. Sinai. For the design of many mosaics, Hellenistic cosmography of earth as an island surrounded by the ocean influenced the depiction of the terrestrial world surrounded by marine and water creatures along the borders of the floor. Other surviving floor mosaics (as in the church at Qasr-el-Lebia in Libya), Coptic textiles, Byzantine silk fragments, and a 6th- or 7th-century silk piece recovered from tomb of St. Cuthbert in Durham portray framed personification of earth (*Geia*) as a young woman with the attributes of cornucopia.

Various maps, such as the one from the 15th-century Nuremberg Chronicle, represent the first day of creation with a simple round medallion that stands for the separation between heaven and earth. In the 13th-century Parisian context, the frontispiece of the moralizing Bible shows the compass-wielding Creator who creates heaven and earth. Stemming from apocalyptic illustrations of an 8th-century Spanish monk, Beatus of Liébana, the so-called O-and-T maps represent the inhabited world as a solid land in the shape of a circle floating in the ocean. This imagery was expanded in the crusader and Ptolemaic maps centered on Jerusalem, often intertwined with biblical figures and images of "monstrous races," whose origin goes back to the ancient texts of Pliny the Elder and the "nations at the end of the earth" (Deut 33:71). Not all of these maps, however, show earth as a circle. The 6th-century Cosmas Indicopleustes' diagrammatic representation of the Christian universe within the ark of the covenant shows earth as a topographical landscape set within a parallelogram enclosed by four oceans. Some images may have alluded to the spherical shape of the earth or cosmos, potentially related to the imperial imagery of the orb. The 6th-century Barberini Ivory (Louvre, Paris) shows an emperor holding an orb as a symbol of the Christian universe. It also displays a personification of the earth and its abundance as a female with exposed breasts and a basket full of fruits.

Indeed, Hellenistic personifications of earth were used in Byzantine, Western medieval, Islamic, and Renaissance art. Personified earth was frequently paired with other entities. In addition to the pairs earth-heaven and earth-ocean, a peculiar pair of earth-desert is depicted in selected scenes. Here, the personifications of earth and desert share iconography; only their attributes provide more specific distinction between the two. The personification of the desert is not a Hellenistic concept but derived from Christian depictions of the nativity and Christmas hymns. In such works, both earth and desert are represented as female figures, either seated or standing, and clad in chitons. Earth often has a foliated crown and diadem, occasionally supplanted by a halo as a Christian reference. Youthful, with long hair, and occasionally in floral clothes,

earth is represented sometimes as a woman on a small island, providing cross-references to Ps 24 : 1–2 and Gen 1 : 9–12. Sometimes she is holding a cornucopia, a snake, or a rocky hill with a cave hollowed out. Desert is visually distinguishable from earth only by her older age or when she carries a manger on her head or in her hands. Cave and manger, as respective attributes of earth and desert, most likely derive from 5th-century Christmas hymns inspired by the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, that enlist the gifts for Jesus: "Earth gives a cave, the Wilderness a manger." The iconographic pair earth-desert is attested in numerous 14th-century churches (Lesnovo, Dečani, Ravanica). These types of images were used in Byzantine, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Russian frescoes, icons, and illuminated texts until the 18th century.

In response to the expectation of the second coming and the apocalyptic verse that the sea and death and hell (associated with the earth) gave up their dead (Rev 20 : 13), earth is often shown either seated on the ground or riding a beast. With her bare breasts exposed, she is holding a snake, veil, or a shallow sarcophagus. Such images from the Last Judgment are recorded in the 11th-century Greek church of the Panagia Chalkeon in Thessaloniki, in the Armenian church of St. George in Ani, in the Russian Cathedral of the Dormition in Vladimir, in the Torcello church, and the Serbian churches in Gračanica, Matejič, and the Virgin Peribletos in Ohrid, to name but a few.

Finally, the reference to the rainbow as a visual reminder of "the everlasting covenant between God and everything that is upon the earth" (Gen 9 : 16–17) may be related to peculiar images of rainbow-like medallions that surround the image of Christ Pantokrator ("the ruler of all") depicted at the apex of a typical Byzantine church.

Bibliography: ▪ Bartrum, G., *Albrecht Dürer and his Legacy* (Princeton, N.J. 2003). ▪ Gligorijević-Maksimović, M., "Classical Elements in the Serbian Painting of the Fourteenth Century" *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 44 (2007) 363–70. ▪ Maguire, H., *Earth and Ocean: the Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park, Pa. 1987). ▪ Maguire, H., "The Mantle of Earth," *Illinois Classical Studies* 7/2 (1987) 221–28. ▪ Popovich, L. D., "Personifications in Palaelogan Painting (1261–1453)" (PhD diss.; Bryn Mawr College, 1963). ▪ Tachau, K. H., "God's Compass and Vana Curiositas: Scientific Study in the Old French Bible Moralisée," *The Art Bulletin* 80/1 (March 1998) 7–33.

Jelena Bogdanović

VIII. Photography

From the late 1960s on, the human perception of earth was deeply influenced – indeed, *changed* – by the dissemination of photographic images of Earth taken in outer space by American satellites and spacecrafts. Such images included: the first picture of earth from moon, transmitted by the unmanned Lunar Orbiter 1 (August 1966); the first artificial color photo of earth transmitted by Department of Defense Gravitational Experiment (DODGE) satellite (August 1967); the first color picture of the whole earth, transmitted by the ATS-III satellite (November 1967); the color "earthrise" photo, by a crewmember of Apollo 8 (December 1968), considered one of most important and influential photos ever taken; and the "Blue marble" photo (December 1972), by a crewmember of Apollo 17, which remains "the most detailed true-color image of the entire Earth to date" ("Visible Earth," at which website all these images are viewable).

Such images, particularly the 1968 earthrise one, soon became associated with the Bible, and with biblical faith, in the popular imagination. The first live telecast of images of earth and moon back to earth, conducted on Christmas Eve 1968, by Apollo 8, was complemented by the three crew members' live radio-transmitted recitation of the account of earth's creation in the KJV rendering of Gen 1 : 1-10 – a recitation which the crew themselves had planned, and which was publicized in advance (Poole: 3, 112–13, 133). This biblical linkage helped to ensure the "almost religious impact" of the earthrise photo, which "resonated powerfully across the planet" (Poole: 128, 139). The photo's biblical association was further reinforced by the stamp the U.S. Postal Service issued in 1969 bearing a detail of the 1968 earthrise image with the inscription: "In the beginning God…"

Bibliography: ▪ *Earthrise: How Man First Saw the Earth* (www.earthrise.org.uk; accessed April 17, 2013). ▪ *NASA Visible Earth* (http://visibleearth.nasa.gov; accessed April 17, 2013). ▪ Poole, R., *Earthrise: How Man First Saw the Earth* (New Haven, Conn. 2008).

IX. Music

There are some remarkable examples of musical reception of biblical references to the earth, most notably pertaining to the earth's creation by God, and to its renewal effected by the birth of Jesus or his second coming.

In the musical reception of biblical representations of the earth's coming into being, the definitive work is Joseph Haydn's three-part oratorio *Die Schöpfung* (1796–98, *The Creation*), to Gottfried van Swieten's text based upon a poem by an unknown English author (one "Lidley [sic]," putatively Thomas Linley Senior [1733–95]), following John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) and hence, through it, the opening chapters of Genesis. Following an overture representing the primordial chaos, the oratorio opens with a recitative by Raphael paraphrasing Gen 1 : 1–2: "In Anfange schuf Gott / Himmel und Erde;/und die Erde war ohne Form und leer" (Haydn: 17 [pt. 1]: "In the beginning God created/ the heaven and the earth. / And the earth was without form and void"). Raphael's subsequent recitatives referencing the earth include paraphrases of